



ATHA and CEDE Aruba encourage community activism

On Thursday, March 23 the press was invited to the offices of the Asociacion Trabou di Hubentud na Aruba (ATHA-The Aruba Association for Working with Youth) to receive information about an initiative between ATHA and CEDE Aruba, the organization that oversees funding for social foundations. Jan Veneman of CEDE Aruba joined organizers Fern Duinker and Filomena Doncker of ATHA to encourage the public to attend a meeting at the Centro di Barrio Playa Pabao on Tuesday, March 28th at 5:00 PM. The subject of the meeting and project is “Aruba ta topa di Bario” or “Get Involved with your Community.”

This initiative will be funded with monies from the Oranje Fonds of the Netherlands, which has allotted 1.4 million Euros to be distributed to Aruba and the other Antillean islands for this project. Each of the barrios in Aruba has a community center that can be a focal point for the care and education of the youth and provide healthy and productive after-school pastimes. Centro di Bario Playa Pabao is a very appropriate choice for the meeting, as they are a model of community activism. The center provides a low cost after school care program that sees that the children do their homework, is home to little league teams that train on their baseball field, and hosts community events nearly every weekend.

The point the organizers wish to make is that it is up to the neighborhoods to take an interest in what their young people are doing with their free time and to provide a place where they can be encouraged to pursue creative, positive activities and social interaction. This project hopes to encourage individual and group participation, thus creating awareness of community problems, participation in solving them and improving the quality of life with continuous social involvement and commitment. It is not enough to complain about social problems, families and individuals must get active, and there is a wealth of funds to assist in any projects to improve the social interaction of each barrio. It is the hope of the people of CEDE and ATHA that the barrios will also relate and share with each other, not as insulated entities, and so provide productive pastimes and events for all the islanders.

Mr. Veneman stated, “There are always funds available for a worthwhile project.” If there are community centers that need funds and assistance by social workers for improvement or projects, Tuesday’s meeting is the place to find out about how they can be acquired and how they can become part of the program. For more information about this project, contact Ms. Fern Duinker at telephone # 582-3773.